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# POEMS OF THE CONFEDERACY





MAJOR HENRY T. STANTON





# POEMS OF THE CONFEDERACY

BEING

SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS

OF

MAJOR HENRY T. STANTON

OF

KENTUCKY



LOUISVILLE:  
JOHN P. MORTON & COMPANY

1900

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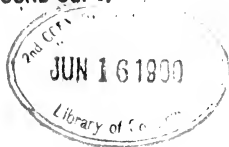
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1900

## Preface.

THE friends of Major Henry T. Stanton, long known as the Poet Laureate of Kentucky, have prepared this little volume as an appropriate souvenir of the Tenth Confederate Reunion, hoping to derive from its sale a sufficient sum to place a modest stone over his grave.

To Kentuckians he needs no introduction, his name being familiar in every household. He was gifted with unusual poetical genius, which manifested itself early and was improved by a finished education. His metrical accuracy was rare, and even in his most impromptu efforts a false measure can scarcely be found. His pen seemed equal to any subject, clothing in appropriate verse both the humorous and the grave, the trite and the heroic. He was a native of Alexandria, Va., where he was born June 30, 1834, but was brought to Kentucky in the following year by his father, Hon. R. H. Stanton, who afterward became a distinguished congressman and judge.

For a time he was a cadet at West Point, and afterward studied law, but after a few years' practice his literary taste led him to espouse journalism, and it became his life-profession. When the civil war broke out he raised a company and entered the Confederate Army, serving during the war in Virginia. In time he became Assistant Adjutant General to Gen. John S. Williams, and was successively in same position with

## *Preface*

Gen. John H. Morgan, Gen. John C. Breckinridge, and Gen. John Echols, with the latter of whom he took his parole at Greensboro, N. C., May 1, 1865. A man of ardent courage, he distinguished himself in several critical actions, and, in addition to being a most efficient staff officer, his wit, his readiness with his pen, and good companionship made him a universal favorite.

After the war he was an editor in Maysville, Ky., until 1870, when he became a resident of Frankfort until his death, May 9, 1899. During most of this period he was associate editor of the Frankfort Yeoman, and for nearly thirty years the writer enjoyed his unbroken friendship. From his fugitive poems, which appeared from time to time in the press, two volumes were published: "The Moneyless Man and other Poems," 1871, and "Jacob Brown and other Poems," 1875. Were a collection made of all his verses worthy of publication, it would comprise a large volume. This is in contemplation at an early day.

The poems selected for this souvenir are all, except that delivered at the unveiling of the Chicago Confederate Monument in May, 1895, from the volume first above named. That of "The Little Boy Guiding the Plow" was written in East Tennessee in 1864, being suggested by an incident of that nature. Those entitled "Sixty-five" and "Sixty-six" were written as New Year's addresses of January, 1866 and 1867, for the Maysville Bulletin, with which he was then connected.

## *Preface*

They are not presented with any purpose to revive the deep feeling engendered by the war, but as a faithful delineation of the situation of the South at that period of its distress and humiliation. Its contemplation will make all the brighter the happy restoration of prosperity and brotherly feeling between the two sections as manifested by the present Reunion. In this restoration Kentucky early took the lead. The fine apostrophe to Kentucky near the close of his poem "Sixty-six," recalling the invocation of Burns to Scotland in the Cotter's Saturday Night, was in consequence of the repeal by the legislature in December, 1865, of the expatriation act which had disfranchised Confederate soldiers from Kentucky.

The poem on Lee was written upon hearing of his death.

The Chicago dedication poem, "Heroic Sleep," commemorates a noble incident when a monument was erected to the memory of Confederate prisoners with the hearty co-operation of members of the Grand Army of the Republic, and found its response in the cordial greeting extended by the Confederate soldiers to the Grand Army Encampment in Louisville the following August. How appropriately, were his pen not silent, could he have commemorated the present occasion!

J. STODDARD JOHNSTON.

LOUISVILLE, KY., May 15, 1900.



# The Little Boy Guiding the Plow



**W**HEN a bugle-note rang in the quivering trees,  
And a drum beat the nation to arms,  
Our people came up from the shore of the seas,  
And away from their blue-mountain farms ;  
All stalwart and strong as the hardy old pines,  
Or the wave-breaking rocks of the shore,  
They came in their long gleaming columns and lines,  
Till the bugle-note sounded no more.  
There are hearts in the ranks, as light as the foam ;  
There are those of a gloomier brow ;  
And some who have left but a mother at home,  
With her little boy guiding the plow.

There are silver-haired men, the tide in their veins  
Leaping down the red alleys of youth,  
All fresh as the water-fall thrown to the plains,  
And as pure as the beautiful truth ;  
There are sons, too, and sires—the old and the young—  
In the midnight and morning of life,

## *The Little Boy Guiding the Plow*

Who came from the hills and the valleys among,  
To be first in the glorious strife ;  
And many, how many, beneath the blue dome,  
Are bending in solitude now,  
To plead for the weal of a mother at home,  
And her little boy guiding the plow !

Oh, the pang of his heart, and the keenest of all  
That a wandering father may know,  
Is the vision of home with its agony-call,  
Its hunger and shivering woe ;  
And who would not chafe in the sacredest chain  
At a memory bitter as this,  
Though he knew in his heart that each moment of pain  
Would but hallow his future to bliss ?  
And who would not weep in a vision of gloom,  
When the Evil One whispered him how  
The toil grew apace to the mother at home,  
And her little boy guiding the plow ?

But courage, keep courage, oh, parent away !  
Be noble, and faithful, and brave !  
And the midnight shall pass, and the glorious day  
Shall be shed over tyranny's grave !  
Though a desolate thing is a fenceless farm,  
And as dreary, a furrowless field,



## *The Little Boy Guiding the Plow*

Still, God in his mercy shall strengthen the arm  
    Of the little boy asking a yield ;  
And the stubbornest clay shall be as the loam,  
    When the patriot spirit shall bow,  
And ask for a friend to the mother at home,  
    And the little boy guiding the plow.

Oh, God will be kind to the needy and poor  
    Who shall suffer from tyranny's hand ;  
His foot-print shall be by the loneliest door,  
    And his bounty shall cover the land ;  
And broken the glebe in the valley and mead,  
    Where the poorest and weakest shall be,  
And plenty shall spring of the promising seed,  
    Till a people shall live to be free ;  
And never, oh, never shall tyranny come,  
    With iron-bound bosom and brow —  
May God give him back to the mother at home,  
    And her little boy guiding the plow !

## Sixty-Five

**I**F a nation hath not goodness then it never can be great,  
For there's nothing like to virtue in the building of a  
State.

Though you bring your quarried marble from a multitude of  
miles,

And rear it into palaces and monumental piles ;

Though with dome and arch and column you may beautify the  
land,

Making earth and air and water pliant agents in your hand,

Still without the seal of virtue on the charter of your State,

In the eyes of Christian people you are neither good nor  
great ;

In the eyes of God Almighty you are only great in sin,

And he'll weigh you in the autumn when His Angel garners in.

Let us look a moment calmly o'er the little season gone ;

Let us mark the boggy places in the road we journey on :

There are others to come after in the path which we have  
trod,

Let us point them from the quicksand to the way upon the  
sod.

There were mighty throes upon us when we ushered in the  
year

Which yesterday in solemn shroud we saw upon its bier ;

## *Sixty-Five*

There were throes as if a giant on our being bent a knee,  
Admonishing of what we were and what we sought to be ;  
We had coffers heavy laden, we had ships upon the brine,  
We had fallow-lands and vineyards with their effervescing  
wine ;

We were strong and stern and haughty from the growth of  
years before,

And our plenitude of glory only made us crave the more :  
Not such glory as the Christian, in the presence of his God,  
Hath to come upon his spirit when he bows to kiss the rod ;  
But the vanity of power and the strength of human pride,  
That had made us scorn the virtues and the honors as they  
died :

So a hand was laid upon us, and our glory stripped away  
As one might strip a flower-stem upon an autumn day.

We have conquered many battles, we have gained a world-  
renown,

We have driven gallant armies and have shaken cities down ;  
We have laid a land in ashes, we have made a people slaves,  
We have carried golden trophies from a citadel of graves ;  
There's blood upon our bayonets and blood upon our guns,  
And some of it's our brothers' blood and some of it's our sons'.  
“What boots it how we triumphed so a victory was gained !  
Who wears the whiter garment may expect to have it  
stained !”

## *Sixty-Five*

Thus spoke we in our vanity, our ecstasy of pride,  
As one who goes rejoicing o'er the grave of one that died ;  
So climbed we up the pathway to the pinnacle of sin,  
And o'er the gulf of darkness we were calmly looking in.

But the wrath of God was on us, and we felt His mighty hand  
As he stripped the mad ambition of its garments in the land.  
We were "proud and strong and haughty," but within a little  
day

We have seen our gilded treasures fast as bubbles float away :  
We are wrecked in pride and fortune ; we were rich, and we  
are poor ;

There's a coffin in our dwelling and a sexton at our door.

Let us turn the crimson pages in the record-book of war :  
There are giant sins upon us, giant crimes to answer for :  
There are cities laid in ashes, there are desolated farms ;  
There are starving children crying in their helpless mothers'  
arms ;

There are widows, there are orphans, cold and homeless in  
the land,

With the husband and the father lying fleshless on the sand ;  
There is woe and want and sorrow over all the Southern  
States ;

From within the nation's chamber, we can hear it at the  
gates ;

## *Sixty-Five*

Yet our flags are flaunting bravely, and our music fills the air,  
For the burthen of the sorrow it is not for us to bear ;  
We have prison-cells and dungeons thickly peopled with the foe,  
And some have on the gibbet died, and some are dying slow.

Such a fever and such passion over all the North has swept,  
That though weeping MERCY pleaded, it hath never known  
she wept ;

And the vengeful cry for slaughter from the Puritanic crowd,  
In the halls of central power hath an echo fierce and loud ;  
From the Northern press and pulpit, from the bench and  
from the bar,

Cometh all the evil pleading of a fury after war.

And but a little while it seems, when frenzy ran so high

The nation by a gallows stood to see a woman die—

A woman weak and trembling and as guiltless as a child,

But a victim to the fury of a passion fierce and wild.

And here the high offended God put forth His hand again,

To write upon the nation's brow the burning mark of CAIN.

Again for WIRZ, the foreigner, a wretched feeble man,

But yesterday we filled his cup until it over-ran ;

And one by one we lessen them, these victims to our hate,

And there's a thirst for human blood an ocean can not sate.

At our helm we had a despot, and for him this crimson tide,  
A Nero who could revel while his better subjects died ;

## *Sixty-Five*

But the Mighty Hand o'ertook him in his revel and his wrong,  
And it taught us in our weakness that the Deity was strong.  
There are those who call him martyr, there are those who call  
him great :

After *passion* cometh *reason* — let the better spirits *wait*;  
As the water finds its level, so the characters of men —  
Some may die and be forgotten, some may die and live again.  
There 's a gray-haired man in prison, under iron bolt and bar,  
A relic and a trophy from the desolating war ;  
He was once a mighty leader, such as few are born to be ;  
He had armies in the nation, he had ships upon the sea ;  
But our strength in war was greater, for we crushed him with  
our might,

And we watched his day of glory as it settled into night.  
Now we hold him bound and shackled, with a palsy in his arm ;  
We have seized and sacked his temple, he is powerless for  
harm.

But to crush and break his spirit, and to take away his all,  
For the crime of Revolution was a punishment too small ;  
And the nation must have vengeance, for her women cry for  
blood —

Though it runs a mighty torrent they would have it run a  
flood.

God forgive them all their passion ! God forgive them all  
their sin !

From their hearts drive out the anger, and invoke the mercy in !

## *Sixty-Five*

There's another cry of sorrow from the liberated black ;  
There is want among his children, and blood upon his track.  
From his proper grade and level they have thought to lift  
him up,

And he glories at their banquet with a poison in his cup.  
From his love and from his labor they have taken him away,  
And the gloomy night is crowding over all his sunny day.

We can hear him in the darkness giving out his bitter moan,  
While for all the bread he asketh they have only found a  
*stone.*

Let him freeze and let him hunger — they are blind and can  
not see ;

It is food and cloth and shelter, and a glory to be FREE.  
O ye great and godly Christians ! O ye Puritanic souls,  
Have ye lost your human spirits ? are ye demons ? are ye  
ghouls ?

Was it not enough to wreck him in his hopes and in his all,  
That ye triumph so and revel at his miserable fall ?

Though the sins of all the nation in their multitude are great,  
There are crimes as black and cruel in the records of our  
State ;

For Kentucky (God forgive her), though she sought to do  
the best,

From the black and base attrition grew as callous as the rest.

## *Sixty-Five*

There were those who did her murder in the guise of right  
and law ;

There's the blood of HUNT upon her, and of CORBIN and  
McGRAW ;

And there's such a cry of sorrow from the grave of bleed-  
ing LONG,

As should pale the cheek of hatred in its memory of the  
wrong.

\* \* \* \* \*

God forgive us all our errors ! God forgive us all our crimes !  
We have lived in sin and darkness—let us hope for better  
times.



## Sixty-Six

### PROLOGUE.

THERE 'S a sculptor for the marbles  
Over all the buried years,  
And his smooth and polished labor  
In a line of white appears.

He hath cunning with the chisel,  
And hath graved the record in,  
Telling what the years departed  
In their living-time have been.

He has now a greater labor,  
Worthy all his better skill ;  
He has carved us many virtues —  
Let him carve us now the ILL.

From the black Egyptian marble  
Let him build a column high,  
That the coming years may mark it  
In their quiet passage by.

## *Sixty-Six*

Never yet hath sculptor graven  
More of crime or more of sin,  
Than is better now for speaking  
What this latter year hath been !

---

We are moving slowly onward  
Through a vista-way of years ;  
We are looking to a future  
Full of sorrow and of tears ;

There is not a light to guide us,  
Not a gleam upon the sky ;  
All our hopes are dead and buried,  
All our joys have flitted by.

We are not the Christian nation  
That we once were thought to be,  
When with common voice we worshipped  
“ From the center to the sea.”

We are not a godly people ;  
We are very far away  
From the path that leadeth outward  
To the everlasting day.

## *Sixty-Six*

Let us see how much of virtue  
We have left in all the store,  
Where a world hath looked and wondered  
In the happy days before.

Let us see how great and godly  
Are the acts of those who take  
On themselves the nation's ermine  
For the troubled nation's sake.

First of all, we dare be tyrant —  
*We* who thought the English sway  
Over torn and trampled Erin  
Should be rudely dashed away ;

*We* who wept for bleeding Poland,  
And our Christian flag unfurled,  
That its folds might flaunt defiance  
Unto all a tyrant world.

We have learned another lesson  
In the onward march of time,  
And we build our greatest virtue  
From the fabric of a crime ;

## *Sixty-Six*

And we spurn aside the maxim  
That "your truer blood will show ;"  
That "he is most ignoble  
Who would trample on a foe."

\* \* \* \* \*

We have swept our foreign legions  
Over all the Southern bands —  
They were fewer than the Spartans,  
We were many as the sands —

And because of all their courage,  
All their stubbornness in fight,  
All their pride of birth and section,  
All their love of human right,

We must put our feet upon them —  
We must crush and bend them low  
Lest their better blood and breeding  
In the future "come to show."

This is Christian, this is proper,  
This is Puritanic law,  
And we see the goodly future  
As our Plymouth fathers saw.

## *Sixty-Six*

What are *they* that we should love them?

They are little of our kin ;  
Seldom yet hath Southern current  
Let the Northern current in.

Proud of blood and proud of bearing,  
Quick in anger to a foe,  
Never yet hath given insult  
Been without attendant blow.

We are calmer, better balanced,  
We are cooler in our veins ;  
We have less of heart in battle,  
More of calculating brains ;

We are not a kindred people,  
And the passage yet of years  
Will not mix the Plymouth waters  
With the blood of Cavaliers !

Next, we claim a godly power,  
And we widen out our span  
When we raise the apish negro  
To the standard of a man.

## *Sixty-Six*

This we do for godly reasons —  
Such our early fathers gave,  
“That the servant may be master,  
And the master may be slave.”

Thus we raise him from the level  
To his greatest earthly goal,  
And we take away his instinct,  
And we give him back a soul —

Such a soul as we are given,  
Such a soul as makes him great ;  
He is worthy of the chancel,  
He is worthy of the State !

He may come into our circles,  
He may mingle with our blood,  
He shall be our equal brother  
As he was before the Flood.

Though the curse of God was on him,  
Though he wandered in the land,  
We would give him whitest vesture,  
We would take him by the hand.

## *Sixty-Six*

In the summer all our meadows  
Were a-bloom with scented hay,  
And the corn upon our acres  
Spread its fullness far away ;

All the shadows of the woodland  
Were astir with heavy kine,  
And the hill-sides gave their treasure  
From the rich Catawba vine.

Far indeed from cold and hunger,  
Far indeed from want and woe,  
We are in the golden current,  
In the glory of its flow,

Let the people down below us,  
In the desolated land,  
Starve and shiver in the palaces  
They built upon the sand ;

We have corn and wine and vesture —  
Let it rot and let it mould ;  
They have nothing now to give us,  
Neither human love nor gold.

## *Sixty-Six*

O ye rich and pampered people !  
O ye cold and cruel men !  
They have crossed your swords in battle,  
They were one and you were ten !

Dare you press your heel upon them,  
When ye usher back the day  
That your full and feasted legions  
Fled before the starving *Grey*?

Are ye cowards, are ye cravens  
That ye fear to let them live ?  
Can ye see a nation perish  
Whilst ye have the food to give ?

They had richer fields and vineyards,  
Better homes and broader lands,  
Till ye threw the torch among them  
From your desolating bands.

They were proof against your valor,  
They had better-tempered steel —  
Think ye now your servant Hunger  
Will be proud to see them kneel.



## *Sixty-Six*

Not to you, O callous stranger !  
Not to baser blood and birth  
Will the true chivalric Southron  
Bend his knee upon the earth.

Better starve amid the ruins  
Of his fallen arch and dome !  
Better die amid the ashes  
Of his violated home !

Not for cold nor not for hunger  
Will he kiss your iron rod :  
There 's an altar for his kneeling,  
It is only to his God !

What of him who, great and noble,  
Stood so very long at bay,  
Whilst the veterans drawn around him  
Left their crimson in the way ?

Still in bondage, still in prison,  
Living still yet near to death,  
Never yet hath human being  
Drawn on earth a prouder breath.

## *Sixty-Six*

First among his race and kindred,  
First among his noble clan,  
He has taught a cruel nation  
How to suffer as a man.

All that cunning, all that malice,  
All that human hate can do,  
All that any Christian martyr  
In his dying ever knew,

He has known and felt and suffered,  
And his spirit liveth still,  
Something more than mortal courage,  
Something more than human will.

Oh, that they could learn to conquer !  
Oh, that they could come to know  
How the truer way is opened  
To the bosom of a foe !

Not by bars of steel and iron,  
Not by rack and torture here,  
Can ye force the higher spirit  
From its great and only sphere.

## *Sixty-Six*

Throw your prison-gates asunder,  
Strike the iron from his hand,  
Bid him walk the earth a freeman,  
Make him equal in the land ;

Show him first that you are noble,  
Let him see that you are brave,  
Act no longer as a coward,  
Be not brutal as a slave.

While he lingers in the shackles  
He is master of you all,  
He is freer than the sentry  
In your very prison-hall ;

He is better, prouder, freer  
Than the proudest of your State ;  
He can teach you what is noble,  
He can show you what is great.

May the angels at his pillow  
Their undying vigils keep !  
God preserve his Southern children,  
Who are praying as they weep !

\* \* \* \* \*

## *Sixty-Six*

As the fire hid in ashes  
Under mountains of the earth,  
When its red volcanic lava  
Struggles into upper birth,

There are words that come unbidden,  
And the lips are burst apart  
By a passion leaping upward  
From its covert in the heart.

Though we bury wrongs, to hide them  
From our own and other eyes,  
There are those that in us quicken,  
For the spirit never dies ;

And upward from the charnel  
Come the living that were dead,  
All the olden wounds upon them,  
All the marks of where they bled.

Oh, that crimes and wrongs were fewer !  
Oh, that men were better grown !  
Oh, that veins had less of fever !  
Oh, that hearts had less of stone !

\* \* \* \* \*

## *Sixty-Six*

Brave Kentucky ! brave, but laggard  
When her sisters gave their blood,  
She has walked into the current  
With her bosom to the flood ;

She has dared to give example  
To the cruel-hearted States,  
When she meets her Southern children  
With a welcome at her gates.

Though a tyrant held her silent  
In the shadow of her guns,  
She had all a mother's yearning  
For the glory of her sons ;

And with chains upon her person,  
And a hand upon her mouth,  
She had not a pulse within her  
But was beating for the South.

Better far than poor Missouri,  
Better far than Tennessee,  
And Virginia, best of any,  
Better now than she.

## *Sixty-Six*

Ah, Virginia ! torn and bleeding,  
O'er the ashes of her dead  
Let the tears of queenly woman  
Be the requiem that is said.

Though they build no pallid marble  
O'er the silence of their graves,  
There are tombs in fairer bosoms  
For Virginia's fallen braves.

Pass, oh seasons, spring and summer !  
Come again, O winter cold !  
TIME shall never lose the record,  
TIME shall hear the story told !

Truth has more of spirit-feature,  
Falsehood more of human cast ;  
Nations yet unborn shall hear it,  
Truth shall conquer at the last.

## Lee

**W**E saw the fragile maiden, May,  
Trip down the paths of morning,  
And queen July in central day,  
Her flower-throne adorning ;

And weeping trees in sombre lines  
Took up an anthem murmur,  
When August, with her trailing vines,  
Went out the gates of Summer.

Now yellow husks are on the grain,  
And leaves are brown and sober,  
And sundown clouds have caught again  
The flush of ripe October ;

We hear the woody hill-tops croon,  
The airy maize-blades whisper,  
The year is in its afternoon,  
And leaf-bells ring the vesper.

What is it gives this gloaming-song  
Its melancholy feature ?  
What is it makes our souls prolong  
This monotone of nature ?

*Lee*

What tearful grief is in our hearts --  
What swaying under-reason ?  
What sorrow real now imparts  
Its spirit to the season ?

The crisping leaves may shoal the ways,  
The sun turn down the heavens—  
Still all the years have fading days,  
And all the days have evens :

Enough— whatever else may be —  
That in this autumn weather,  
The verdure of the world and LEE  
Have silent fled together.

So prone are men where'er they move  
To tread the ways of evil,  
They seldom hold their kind above  
A common grade and level ;

But LEE, beside his fellow-man,  
Stood, over all, a giant —  
The higher type — the perfect plan —  
God fearing, God-reliant.



## *Lee*

A giant not alone in fields  
Where bent the sanguine Reaper,  
Where Death threw o'er his harvest-yields  
An autumn crimson deeper ;

But with an iron strength of will  
He sought his life to fashion ;  
He held his ruder pulses still,  
And closed the gates of passion.

There have been men whose mighty deeds,  
On cold historic pages,  
Are driven like October seeds  
Along the reaching ages ;

Whose statues stand like sentinels,  
On whited shafts and bases,  
Whose ashes rest in marble cells,  
And sepulchres and vases ;

But he who in this autumn time  
Was lost beyond the river,  
Has found a glory-path to climb,  
Forever and forever !

*Lee*

And monumental marble here,  
With deeds of honor graven,  
What can it be to one so near  
The inner gates of Heaven ?

By still Potomac's margin dun,  
Where shrilly calls the plover,  
Where lean the heights of Arlington  
Its glassing waters over,

No autumn voices haunt the moles,  
No breezy covert ripples,  
No longer whirl the leaves in shoals  
Beneath the stately maples ;

Some vandal's axe has shorn the crest,  
The woody slopes are shaven,  
No longer builds the dove her nest  
Where mournful croaks the raven ;

But down the Southland's fruity plain  
The leaves are all a-quiver,  
And *there* his memory shall reign  
Forever and forever !

## Heroic Sleep

**W**ITHIN this closed and darkened earth  
All seeds of being lie,  
That, in good time, find light and birth,  
To blossom and to die ;  
To blossom and to fruit and turn  
Again to whence they came,  
To give their ashes to an urn  
Where ash comes back to flame.

Such is the law of life and death —  
The law that nature gives —  
Man comes from earth to one short breath,  
And dies while yet he lives ;  
For in this universe of parts  
One part completes the whole,  
With varied minds, with varied hearts,  
There 's one unvaried soul.

In all our states of being here,  
From summer's dawn to frost,  
From dark to light, from birth to bier,  
No part of soul is lost ;  
A system grand goes on and on,  
With true, untiring wheels,  
And that which in our night is gone,  
Our morrow's sun reveals.

## *Heroic Sleep*

There is no finite mind that solves  
This problem of God's plan ;  
We know not if our life evolves  
From mollusk up to man ;  
We can not trace an atom's course,  
Above or under earth,  
We can not find in vital force  
Its secret springs of birth.

Mayhap a thousand million years  
Have been since humankind  
Came crowding on this sphere of spheres,  
With mastery of mind ;  
We may not tell, we can not know,  
What space has been since then,  
Though buried ages rise to show  
Their prehistoric men.

A monolith left here and there  
In isolation stands ;  
An obelisk that spears the air  
Gleams out of drifted sands ;  
On ancient Egypt's fruitless waste  
Vast pyramids are piled,  
That prove how perished races graced  
A spot that one time smiled.

## *Heroic Sleep*

Throughout this thousand million years  
That may, perhaps, have sped,  
At intervals some mark appears  
Above the honored dead ;  
Some mark of issues lost, or won,  
With great men stricken down,  
Some proof of sanguine war-work done  
For subject, or for crown.

That martial pulse which men now feel,  
Throbbled in the cycles gone,  
And battles waged with stone and steel,  
For human pride went on.  
We look not back from this new day  
For good or ill so wrought —  
Sufficient that their granites say,  
“ Here rest the men who fought.”

Whilst yet our Aryan race is young,  
To these long lines of stone,  
New hills and vales, and plains among,  
We proudly add our own —  
We leave our marks of contests red,  
Of battles fought too well,  
And rear our piles to heroes dead  
This glory-tale to tell.

## *Heroic Sleep*

Where bright Potomac in the sun,  
A plate of silver lies,  
Our marble shaft to Washington  
Goes out to pierce the skies ;  
An obelisk that stands and waits  
New centuries of sun,  
Compiled of stones from sovereign States,  
He moulded into one.

There stands a mark at Bunker Hill,  
On grand historic ground,  
That proves how in the rebel still  
The patriot is found ;  
And everywhere about this land  
These summer sunbeams slant,  
On polished marble stones that stand  
To Lincoln, Lee, and Grant.

For men who fought in all our wars,  
And gave their valiant blood,  
To glow in after-time, like Mars  
O'er life's enduring flood ;  
For noble men on every field,  
To honor's cause allied,  
Whose truth and glory stand revealed  
In that they fought and died.

## *Heroic Sleep*

That after years and after man  
    May find a stone-mark here,  
Of strife 'twixt Northern Puritan  
    And Southern Cavalier ;  
That centuries anon may see  
    How man to-day was brave,  
This speaking pile is placed to be  
    A guide-post to his grave.

This granite stands for men who fought,  
    As men heroic must,  
Who loves his land, and has no thought  
    But that his cause is just ;  
This mark is such as valor plans  
    For spirit such as hers,  
Set up by victor Puritans  
    For vanquished Cavaliers.

It may not be that deathless pile  
    Of Egypt's brazen clime,  
Nor yet that Needle of the Nile,  
    From out the sands of time ;  
But it will stand while men believe  
    That glory fits the brave,  
While flowers bloom, while women grieve  
    Beside the hero's grave.

## *Heroic Sleep*

Six thousand men lie buried here  
Who from their prison close  
Were borne upon a soldier's bier  
To rest among their foes ;  
No mother's tears, no wife's bewail,  
No child's pathetic cry ;  
No home friend near to list his tale  
Or watch the soldier die.

At martial hands their graves were made,  
Their coffins rudely drest,  
And valiant soldiers gently laid  
Their foemen down to rest ;  
And thus the brotherhood of man  
Is grandly proven here —  
It puts aside the Puritan,  
Blots out the Cavalier.

This kinship of the hero lives,  
Estrange it how you will ;  
The soldier to the soldier gives  
His meed of honor still ;  
No matter what the cause may be,  
If wrongful or if just,  
Chivalric foemen only see  
True valor in the dust.



## *Heroic Sleep*

The coward puts his spurning feet  
Upon a foeman's grave ;  
That base-blood cry, " Revenge is sweet,"  
Came never from the brave ;  
And truer manhood noblest shows  
Among ignoble hordes,  
When victors to their vanquished foes  
Hand back the yielded swords.

This honor done on Northern soil  
To Southern soldiers dead,  
In days to come shall prove a foil  
To blood by brothers shed ;  
Shall stand before our children's eyes,  
A proof that courage shows  
The best where it can recognize  
The manhood of its foes.

When faction lives and heat begins,  
And naught save war avails,  
Comes revolution, where it wins,  
Rebellion, where it fails ;  
And from this rule of wrathfulness,  
When blood-bound peoples meet,  
The patriot is in success,  
The traitor in defeat.

## *Heroic Sleep*

When from proud England's iron sway  
Our liberties we tore,  
Her stigma, "rebel," died away —  
Her "traitor" lived no more.  
With man to man in conflict met,  
And war's great havoc done,  
There came an end to epithet  
When rebel-traitors won.

With fast-subsiding passion here  
From internecine strife,  
The Puritan and Cavalier  
Are lost in newer life ;  
Our days of perfect peace are on,  
Our compact made anew,  
And every shade of grey has gone  
To mingle with the blue.

No more reproach, the end has come,  
The argument is o'er,  
In North and South the calling drum  
Shall be for us no more —  
The banner of St. Andrew's cross  
In silent dust is lain,  
And what has been a section's loss  
Shall prove a nation's gain.

## *Heroic Sleep*

While yon unbelted soldier bends  
    Above this granite base,  
Our land shall be the home of friends  
    Where peace upholds its mace ;  
Where martial lines shall never stand  
    With gleaming sword and gun,  
Until, in service of our land,  
    We march to fight as one.

Nor Puritan, nor Cavalier,  
    A home-grown strife shall see,  
While o'er the soldiers resting  
    The granite shaft shall be ;  
With all of bitterness forgot,  
    With all of taunting done,  
Columbia is freedom's spot —  
    Its sovereign States are one.

We've had our change from life to death,  
    And back from death to life ;  
The law of nature gave us breath,  
    And with it pride and strife ;  
We came from earth to bloom and fruit,  
    With mastery of mind ;  
We've held our kingdom o'er the brute  
    As gracious God designed.

## *Heroic Sleep*

And still we keep the atom's place  
In this grand system here —  
We die and live again, through grace,  
Immortal in our sphere ;  
We fall, and find our rest in earth,  
Where seeds in darkness lie,  
Where all things fall and come to birth  
And seem again to die.

There is no finite mind that solves  
The problem of this plan ;  
We can not know how God evolves  
His fragile creature, man ;  
We only know that while we live  
The law of God is just,  
And what we take from earth we give,  
In tribute, back to dust.

And granite monuments, that stand  
Through Time's untiring roll,  
Are only guide-posts on the land  
To show the course of soul ;  
For human substance goes to earth,  
Whence human passions rise,  
But soul with God himself had birth,  
And lives and never dies.































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